

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 (cancel).

Claims 2 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim 14, further comprising a drain; the floor gradually sloping towards the drain. , ~~allowing for faster drainage of any water on the floor.~~

Claims 3 (cancel).

Claims 4 (currently amended). ~~The bathing apparatus of claim 1 wherein the banister is hingedly connected to the inside.~~

A bathing apparatus to assist bathing of a disabled bather, comprising:

a bathtub having walls that define at least in part a floor and a ramp joining the floor;

the ramp defining a slope with respect to the floor;

a banister hingedly connected to and operable for rotation about a sidewall of the bathtub associated with defining the ramp, the banister when rotationally positioned for supported placement within the bathtub to extend over the ramp and over a substantial length of the floor, the banister comprising:

a descending portion having a slope to allow a bather upon entry at the sidewall to slide his seat downwardly along the descending portion; and

a bench portion that transitions longitudinally from the descending portion, the bench portion defined in part by a seating surface of a substantially horizontal extent along its length and disposed at a given height above the floor of the bathtub suitable for seating a bather.

Claims 5 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim ~~14~~, ~~further comprising wherein the banister further comprises an enlarged portion extending outwardly from the bench portion, of the level portion extending at least in part out of the upper surface, for the purpose of providing the enlarged portion operable to provide support and leverage for the bather's limbs of a bather.~~

Claims 6 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim 5, wherein the enlarged portion is located at the end of the upper surface farthest an end of the bench portion that is more distant from the descending portion.

Claims 7 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim ~~14~~, wherein ~~the upper surface's height is less than the height of the inside, relative to the floor the upper surface of the bench portion defines a height less than that of the walls of the bathtub.~~

Claims 8 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim ~~17~~, wherein the distance of height defined by the upper surface from the floor changes along the length of the level portion of the bench portion gradually changes along its length of the level portion.

Claims 9 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim ~~14~~, wherein at least part of ~~the upper surface curves in the direction of toward the floor a portion of a surface of the banister, per a lateral cross section, curves radially toward the floor to assist straddling by a bather when seated thereon.~~

Claims 10 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim ~~14~~, ~~further comprising a ramp distal end, with respect to the floor, the ramp distal end being approximately the same height above ground level as a wheel chair seat wherein the sidewall defining the ramp and the banister meet at an elevation operable to allow a bather substantial ease in transfer thereto from a seat of a wheel chair.~~

Claims 11 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim ~~14~~, further comprising extensions from the level portion, the extensions providing support to the that jut outwardly from the contoured surface of the bench portion operable to provide means by which to support limbs of the bather.

Claims 12 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim ~~14~~, wherein the upper portion slopes less steeply to the lower portion than the ramp slopes to the floor descending portion of the banister defines a slope more gradual than that defined by the ramp.

Claims 13 (currently amended). A bathing apparatus comprising:

a bathtub having ~~a bathtub inside~~ walls defining an interior for receiving water and a bather for bathing;

~~the inside comprising a floor, having a first end, and a ramp adjacent to the floor at the first end; the ramp having a distal end with respect to the floor; said ramp having a slope; said slope starting at about the ramp distal end and descending to the floor first end; said slope being suitable for safely sliding on the descending portion from the ramp distal end to the floor.~~

a banister hingedly coupled to a sidewall of the walls for the bathtub; said banister comprising a descending portion, ~~with a descending portion upper end, and a descending portion lower end with respect to the floor;~~ and a substantially-level portion having a level portion proximal end with respect to the descending portion lower end; the level portion proximal end being adjacent to the lower end;

the descending portion comprising a surface that defines ~~descending from about the ramp distal end at a downward slope that extends toward to the lower end;~~ the downward slope being less than the slope of the ramp and suitable for sliding down the banister ~~from the descending portion upper end to the level portion;~~

the level portion extending longitudinally, ~~substantially horizontally with respect to the vertical;~~ from the descending portion lower end and over the bathtub a floor of the bathtub, the level portion having an upper surface defining a substantially horizontal bench of a length and a height suitable for seating a bather. ~~sitting on the surface of the level portion.~~

Claim 14 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim 13, wherein the walls of the bathtub define an outline, per an overhead view, that is substantially circular.

Claim 15 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim 13, wherein the walls of the bathtub define an outline, per an overhead view, that is substantially pentagonal.

Claims 16 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim 13, wherein the walls of the bathtub define an outline, per an overhead view, that is substantially rectangular.

Claims 17 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim 13, further comprising a drain, the floor sloping towards the drain, ~~allowing for faster drainage of any water on the floor.~~

Claims 18 (cancel).

Claim 19 (cancel).

Claims 20 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim 13, wherein the banister further comprises an enlarged portion at an end of the level portion that defines a curved surface at the end of the banister of a width and height greater than that for the level portion. ~~further comprising an upper surface of the level portion, a part of the level portion extending, at least in part out of the upper surface, in a curved manner forming an enlarged portion of the level portion.~~

Claims 21 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim 13, ~~further comprising an~~ wherein the substantially horizontal bench is defined by the upper surface of the level portion, the upper surface comprising a for height less than the height of the walls of the bathtub. ~~inside, relative to the floor.~~

Claims 22 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim 13, ~~further comprising an upper surface of the level portion, the distance of~~ wherein the upper surface of the level portion defines a height over from the floor varying that varies along the its length. ~~of the level portion.~~

Claims 23 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim 13, ~~further comprising an upper surface of~~ wherein the level portion, per a lateral cross section, defines a the upper surface that curving curves concavely in the along a direction of toward the floor.

Claims 24 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim 13, wherein ~~the ramp distal end is approximately the same height above ground level as a wheel chair seat~~ the descending portion of the banister pivotally connects to the sidewall at a height operable to assist transfer of a disabled bather thereto from a seat of a wheel chair.

Claims 25 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim 13, further comprising extensions that jut outwardly from a surface of the level portion, the extensions providing operable to support to the limbs of the a bather.

Claims 26 (currently amended). The bathing apparatus of claim 13, wherein the downward slope defined by the descending portion of the banister descends arises out of the ramp by descending less quickly than the a ramp defined by the sidewall to which the banister is pivotally connected.

Claims 27 (currently amended). A bathing apparatus ~~that is easy and safe for~~ to assist bathing of a disabled bather, bathers to enter, use, and exit, comprising:

walls and a floor joined to the base of the walls for defining a reservoir to receive water for bathing;

a rear wall of the walls comprising an upper rim that is distal relative to defining in part a ramp that slopes downwardly toward the floor;

a banister pivotally coupled to the rear wall and, when positioned for supported placement on the floor, the banister comprising:

a descending portion that transitions to a level portion for extending longitudinally between sidewalls of the walls toward a front wall thereof opposite the rear wall;

the descending portion comprising a surface that extends from about an upper rim of the rear wall to the level portion of the banister and defines a slope of magnitude less than that defined by the ramp of the rear wall, the surface of the descending portion operable to allow a bather, upon entry at the rear wall, to slide seated thereon toward the level portion; and

the level portion comprising a surface defining a substantially horizontal extent disposed longitudinally over the floor between the sidewalls and operable to allow a bather to straddle or sit thereon with feet extended toward or resting on the floor.

~~the walls further comprising a ramp, the ramp having an angle relative to horizontal to allow a bather to slide on the ramp in the direction of the floor;~~

~~the ramp and the floor comprising, as viewed from above relative to the floor, a region;~~

~~the region comprising a first subregion, a second subregion, and a third subregion; the first subregion and second subregion at least partly adjacent to each other and to the third region; the third subregion being between part of the first subregion and part of the second subregion;~~

~~the third subregion commencing at about the upper rim and extending substantially into the floor, as viewed from above;~~

~~the third subregion, as viewed from a side, having a height and a length relative to the first subregion and the second subregion;~~

~~the third subregion having a descending portion and a substantially level portion;~~

~~the descending portion extending from about the upper rim in the direction of the floor; the height of the descending portion gradually increasing as the descending portion extends from about the upper rim toward the floor to allow a bather to slide on the descending portion from the direction of the upper rim in the direction of the floor;~~

~~the substantially level portion having an upper surface relative to the floor, the height and length of the substantially level portion allowing a bather to sit on the upper surface with feet extending toward or resting on the floor.~~

Claims 28 (cancel).

Claim 29 (currently amended). ~~The apparatus of claim 28, the banister further~~ An apparatus to assist bathing a patient, comprising:

a surface contoured to define at least in part sidewalls and a floor to a primary reservoir operable to receive water for bathing a patient;

a banister disposed between the sidewalls and over the floor of the primary reservoir;

the banister extending from a rear sidewall of the sidewalls and into the primary reservoir toward a front sidewall of the sidewalls, and standing between left and right sidewalls of the sidewalls to divide the primary reservoir into left and right sub-reservoir regions;

the banister, per a profile view, comprising:

a sloped portion that extends from the rear sidewall with a downward slope,

a platform portion that extends further inwardly from the sloped portion, the platform to seat a patient within and above the floor of the primary reservoir, and

a forward end portion to terminate the longitudinal length of the banister at an end thereof distal the rear sidewall,

the forward end portion comprising, per a top view, a width greater than a width of the sloped portion and greater than a width of the platform portion near the sloped portion.

Claim 30 (original). The apparatus of claim 29, in which the forward end portion of the banister comprises a transition region that meets the platform region and transitions a slope of the banister upward.

Claim 31 (original). The apparatus of claim 30, in which an upper surface of the platform region defines a profile that is substantially horizontal.

Claim 32 (currently amended). The apparatus of claim 30, in which the forward end portion defines part of a rounded termination for the ~~pedestal~~ banister.

Claims 33 (currently amended). The apparatus of claim 2829, in which the banister further comprises means to support the slope portion and the platform portion relative to the floor of the primary reservoir.

Claims 34 (currently amended). The apparatus of claim 33, in which the floor comprises:
a portion that defines an opening to a drain disposed near the front sidewall; and
a descending surface that defines a ramp that extends from a base of the rear sidewall, per a cross-sectional view, toward the drain.

Claim 35 (original). The apparatus of claim 34, in which the left and right sub-reservoir regions are in communication with each other around the banister over the drain.

Claim 36 (original). The apparatus of claim 35, the left and right sub-reservoir regions in further communication with each other via apertures through the support means.

Claim 37 (original). The apparatus of claim 35, the banister contiguous with the sidewalls and the floor associated with the contoured surface that defines the primary reservoir.

Claim 38 (original). The apparatus of claim 35, the banister removably attached to the contoured surface that defines the primary reservoir.

Claims 39 (currently amended). The apparatus of claim 2829, in which
the rear sidewall comprises:

a base region that meets the floor for the primary reservoir, and
an upper region at an elevation related to a depth for the primary reservoir; and
the sloped portion of the banister meets the upper region of the rear sidewall.

Claims 40 (original). The apparatus of claim 39, in which the sloped portion of the banister meets the upper region of the rear sidewall at an elevation above ground level.

Claim 41 (currently amended): The apparatus of claim 40, in which the elevation where the sloped portion meets the upper region of the rear sidewall is substantially equal to operable to ease transfer of a patient thereto from that for a seat to of a wheel chair.

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of Replacement Drawings include adding a new drawing FIG. 2B and also changes to FIGS. 1-8 to simplify their original sheets. Also attached are redline copies for highlighting changes.

In Figure 1, alternative outlines in phantom for exemplary pentagonal or circular sidewalls of a bathtub have been added as suggested by the Examiner.

In new Figure 2B, an additional view of a banister is represented for illustrating operability with a hinged connection to a sidewall of a bathtub as suggested by the Examiner.

In Figures 1 – 8, various annotations and lead lines have been revised and/or removed to assist more clear comprehension for embodiments of the invention.

The features presented in these drawings are submitted as having been already implicit within the original disclosure and accordingly are deemed not to introduce any new matter.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

Annotated Sheets Showing Changes